

# School military education and the construction of a national identity in Portugal in the passage from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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**ABSTRACT:** The liberal and republican discourses produced in Portugal in the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century emphasized the figure of the citizen-soldier as part of the civic cult of the Nation. The ideal citizen of the new Republic, proclaimed at last in 1910, should be orderly, disciplined, morally exemplary and physically fit to address the harshness and needs of the war, besides being an unconditional lover of his Homeland. With this article we intend to promote a reflection on the purposes and character of the youth militarization project developed, in two different moments of the above-mentioned period, under the predominant influence of republicanism. Forwarding both moments of the study, our concern goes to the relations between military instruction and other curricular areas, particularly physical education, and moral and civic education. We will pay attention to the ritual practices that are developed which are an alternative to the catholic ritualism. In addition, the controversies with expression in the pedagogical field that have permanently accompanied the implementation of military preparation are analysed. Finally, we will seek to integrate the aforementioned project within the framework of international experiences, which had the same goals.

**EET-TEE KEYWORDS:** Republicanism; Civics; National Identity; Primary School; Military Education; Citizen-soldier; School battalions; Portugal; XIX-XX Centuries.

## *Introduction*

During the 1880s, a time when we witness in Portugal the first major experience of educational decentralization, the Lisbon Municipality's Instruction Department, mainly through the action of Republican Masons, implements an ambitious project of popular education. Actually, this department starts a set of measures in order to modernize education, attempting to track the movements of pedagogical innovation in Europe's reference countries. The strongest evidence goes, among others, to the military gymnastics and schools battalions. However, in Portugal its diffusion was not as remarkable as in other countries of Western political and cultural space. Nevertheless, schools battalions represented a backdrop of divergent opinions sometimes associated with controversy. In what follows, we will see that the introduction of school battalions in the Lisbon's Municipality is an active part of a pedagogical attitude whose intention is to articulate the physical, intellectual and moral education – the concept of «integral education». Indeed, for republicans the broadcasting of their ideals necessarily meant the existence of a renewed primary school, which would be capable of teaching an enriched programme – the graded school.

After the implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic, in 1910, the idea of school battalions recovered from its effective extinction in the past 1890s. A project was then developed in primary schools aiming the Preparatory Military Instruction of young Portuguese. Beyond the military training of future citizens, which allowed them, if necessary, to defend the Homeland bearing arms in case of danger, Preparatory Military Instruction had equally among its goals to persuade those young men to interiorize a set of values and skills considered essential. Thus, Preparatory Military Instruction arises strongly articulated with both physical education, which contributes to their development during an early stage, and moral and civic education of a secular bias reinforced in that period. It also underlies the ritual exhibition of school battalions within the public space during moments of civic festivity.

Our theses are sustained by a range of sources, including educational periodicals, documents produced by the Lisbon Municipality's Instruction Department, namely received correspondence from the schools battalions' offices, and publications produced within the Preparatory Military Instruction context, and the societies organized to broadcast it, in addition to a set of other pedagogical publications.

## *School battalions of Lisbon's municipality (1880s)*

In Portugal, it is after the definitive instauration of the liberal regime (1834) that the need for physical education arises via three sectors: military, medical

and educational<sup>1</sup>. It is also important to mention that during the second half of the nineteenth century there is a progressive change in the orientation of physical education. Indeed, the hygienic and military perspective gives rise to an «insistent military preparation»<sup>2</sup>. In one sense, the defence of physical education does not constitute more than an aspect of educational campaign promoted by the bourgeoisies' elites with the intent to create a national consciousness. Moreover, in the 1870s arises the idea that introducing military instruction in primary school would contribute to military regeneration and the country's defence, according to the perspective of Luís Jardim, educational councilman of the Lisbon's City Hall:

When talking about physical education it should not be forgotten that it is convenient to expand primary education with military instruction. This exercise improves the student's physical conditions, leads the population to accept the military organization of Germany and Switzerland, and the main reason, that today is so little attended, it ends with the repugnance of our people for the recruitment; this repugnance is so ingrained that it is one of the main reasons for emigration<sup>3</sup>.

And it is only in the 1880s – period during which the first great experience of educational decentralization takes place in Portugal – that gymnastics becomes part of the primary school curriculum (complementary degree), not without causing controversy and some opposition, especially since the measure extended itself to female education; no less important are the efforts of Lisbon's municipality to introduce physical education and military gymnastics in schools since the previous decade. Indeed, from the school year of 1875/76, a sum for this purpose is included in the budget of the aforementioned municipality. However, that sum was exclusively allocated to Central School Nr. 1<sup>4</sup>. The reason is related to the fact that it was a school built by municipal initiative at the request of Elias Garcia<sup>5</sup>, educational councilman; it is, in fact, the first graded school<sup>6</sup> to be opened in Portugal (1875). The belief of Elias Garcia is clear: he believed that the diffusion of republican ideals obligatory meant the existence of a renewed primary school capable of providing an enriched programme. The underlying idea is the articulation of physical, intellectual and moral education

<sup>1</sup> A. Estrela, *Elementos e Reflexões sobre a Educação Física em Portugal, no Período Compreendido entre 1834 e 1910*, «Boletim INEF», n. 1-2, from January to June 1972, pp. 19-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> L. Jardim, *A Instrução Primária no Município de Lisboa*, Lisboa, Typographia de Christovão Augusto Rodrigues, 1877, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> J. Elias Garcia, *A Instrução Militar na Eschola Primária e no Lyceu*, «Froebel», n. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1882, pp. 51-52.

<sup>5</sup> Elias Garcia was a military engineer by training. He founded the first republican newspaper and he was a member of the Portuguese Freemasonry from 1853 on, and was even elected grand-master in 1885.

<sup>6</sup> It is useful to mention that in Portugal expressions like «central school» and «graded school» have identical meanings.

– the concept of «integral education»<sup>7</sup>. From this point of view, the enthusiasm for graded school organization – adopted in all cultured nations and based upon the principles of labour division for optimizing results<sup>8</sup> – reflected the possibility to effectively respond to the intention of schooling a high number of children and promoting the republican principles. The symbolic significance enclosing the inauguration of a graded school with several classes is easily understood for it is, in fact, very different than creating a unitary school. Indeed, the buildings of graded schools would serve as privileged spaces for conducting civic celebrations and school rituals<sup>9</sup> (for example, military parades).

Throughout the decentralizing cycle, in force between 1881 and 1892, and framed by the Reform of António Rodrigues Sampaio (Law of 02/05/1878), Lisbon's municipality will act on its own, that is, exceeding the powers and competencies transferred from the centralized administration<sup>10</sup>. The succeeding councilmen, especially until the mid-1880s, are lead «by the desire [...] of endowing the city of Lisbon with all the improvements that the most educated countries in Europe have»<sup>11</sup>.

It is within this new political context that the organization of school battalions in Lisbon's municipal schools should be understood in 1882; Teófilo Ferreira<sup>12</sup> was then the educational councilman, whom, despite being monarchical, concretized the intents of Elias Garcia. This circumstance – the different political positioning of the aforementioned councilmen – surpasses the value of foreign educational reference, the idea that educational improvement meant the appropriation of modern pedagogical methods, if you will; it should, therefore, be understood in the framework of international educational networks<sup>13</sup>. A question that emerges from the thought of Teófilo Ferreira:

Regarding the battalions, I was the one that organized them in Lisbon, obeying to the enthusiasm with which similar institution was welcomed in some of the foreign countries I have visited. However, I must confess to the Parliament members that in educational matters there are some innovations that share the contingencies and whims of fashion<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> A. Nóvoa, *Evidentemente*, Porto, Edições ASA, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> M.M. del Pozo Andrés, *Urbanismo y Educación. Política Educativa y Expansión Escolar en Madrid (1900-1931)*, Alcalá de Henares, Universidad de Alcalá, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> We use this concept within the meaning assigned to it by P. Maclaren, *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*, London and Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

<sup>10</sup> C. Manique da Silva, *Do modo de aprender e de ensinar. Renovação pedagógica e cenários de experimentação da escola graduada (1834-1892)*, Tese de Doutoramento em História da Educação, Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação, Universidade de Lisboa, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> *Diário do Governo*, nr. 84, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1886, p. 1022.

<sup>12</sup> Teófilo Ferreira, besides being educational councilman (position that he held until 1883), was a teacher of primary and normal school, as well as doctor of medicine and parliamentarian.

<sup>13</sup> A.C. Venancio Mignot, J. Gonçalves Gondra, *Viagens de educadores e circulação de modelos pedagógicos*, in A.C. Venancio Mignot, J. Gonçalves Gondra (edd.), *Viagens pedagógicas*, São Paulo, Cortez, 2007, pp. 7-14.

<sup>14</sup> T. Ferreira, *O Ministerio da Instrução Publica e a centralisação do ensino primário oficial*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1890, p. 22.

The words of Teófilo Ferreira, uttered at a time when the return to centralization policies was felt, emphasize the alignment with the cultured nations of Europe and an inflection on the way to perspective school battalions. Regarding the first idea, the French example is a reference. The temporal coincidence of experiences should be underlined, despite the scale differences<sup>15</sup>. In fact, the decree of 6<sup>th</sup> July 1882, signed by the minister Jules Ferry, introduces school battalions in France, whose disappearance can be accepted in 1891<sup>16</sup>. But that does not mean admitting a parallel evolution. On the contrary, throughout the text we will seek to highlight *variations*, thus emphasizing the diversity of experiences related to contexts and actors. On the other hand, and recovering the last words of Teófilo Ferreira, over the 1880s a change in the way school battalions are perceived by different segments of society is clear. Indeed, from an initial excitement with the students' premature military instruction (although not consensual) there is an evolution towards a discredit situation regarding pedagogical advantages of «starting in general school the soldier's special education», to adopt the expression of Adolfo Coelho<sup>17</sup>.

What seems to be important to emphasise – and it is independent of political certification – is that the implementation of school battalions reflects the possibility of «thinking the nation»<sup>18</sup> according to the teaching of civic virtues, a set of moral and patriotic practices and discourses. However, it is useful to consider, in line with the arguments of Nicolas Mariot, that «civic enthusiasm» cannot only be read as an official «intention». That is to say that to be effective it has to be «an enthusiasm manifested in a civic situation recognized as such by the participants»<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, from the historical point of view it is not possible to assign to the school just replication and integration functions.

Evoking now the historical background of the Lisbon's municipality school battalions, it must be said that the motive for their introduction appears to be closely linked to the thesis of the country's military regeneration, already advocated by Luis Jardim in the 1870s. It is not, however, a similar situation to the one registered in France; among other constraints, the defeat of 1871

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, in France, in the year of 1886, there were 146 school battalions regularly constituted, spread over several municipalities, meaning a total workforce of about 29,000 students. A. Brouzac, *Les bataillons scolaires 1880-1891. L'éducation militaire à l'école de la République*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004. On the other hand, in Portugal, during the 1880s, school battalions are practically confined to the capital's municipality, and the effective students properly integrated have never exceeded a few hundred.

<sup>16</sup> See Brouzac, *Les bataillons scolaires 1880-1891*, cit. For the institution of the battalions, the author emphasizes the reference of the Paris school battalion, founded in 1881.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted by Rogério Fernandes in *As ideias pedagógicas de Francisco Adolfo Coelho*, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1973, p. 458.

<sup>18</sup> We have adopted this expression from the work of Benedict Anderson: *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, 5<sup>th</sup> impr, London, Verso, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> N. Mariot, *Qu'est-ce qu'un «enthousiasme civique»? Sur l'historiographie des fêtes politiques en France après 1789*, «Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales», n. 1, 2008, pp. 113-139, in particular p. 138.

against the Prussian army would have created the conditions for the emergence of school battalions<sup>20</sup>. Albert Brouzac even speaks in a sense of «revenge»<sup>21</sup>.

What was actually scheduled was the youth familiarization with military service, something that among other things involved an important exhibition component of the so-called «soldiers-students», particularly associated with solemn moments and festivities. In this regard, take notice on the way one of the first public appearances of Lisbon's municipality school battalions is described:

When on last 24<sup>th</sup> December [1882], in the Navy's Arsenal risk room, there was the distribution of prizes to the students of the central and parochial municipal schools, their majesties honour guard was carried out by the 1<sup>st</sup> company of municipal soldier-students, which in number of 80, perfectly armed and equipped, showed a martial garb and a correction of evolutions worthy of enthusiastic reception, during and after the ceremony; everywhere in the streets the quivering and consecration of the capital's people was felt towards the patriotic crusade that the municipality experienced for the greater good of our military regeneration<sup>22</sup>.

In addition to the exaltation of the population's enthusiasm, the writer seeks to highlight the apparatus of the civic celebration accomplished through the symbolism of body postures, choreographies, and uniforms. Actually, as noted by Rosa Fátima de Sousa, «school battalions symbolized one of the primary purposes of public school: civic celebration»<sup>23</sup>. In this sense, it helped to reinforce the imaginary and to institute a national memory. Thus, there is no surprise in the Lisbon's municipality initial investment in equipping school battalions, acquiring armament (references in this case were the weapons used in Paris' schools) and other equipment abroad<sup>24</sup>.

At an early moment, however, the importance granted to uniforms, insignias, and armaments – notoriously symbolic and scenic – hides organizational weaknesses. Moreover, contrarily to what has happened in France<sup>25</sup>, Lisbon's municipality battalions would never have a very definite and consistent regulation. On the other hand, and this is another distinctive aspect from the French case, municipal tutelage would overlap military authority<sup>26</sup>. In fact, and despite the fact that teachers of gymnastics and military exercises were professional military, there is a chain in command whose top is occupied by

<sup>20</sup> Brouzac, *Les bataillons scolaires 1880-1891*, cit.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *O Batalhão Escolar do Município Lisbonense*, «Froebel», n. 13, 1883, pp. 97-99, in particular p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> R.F. de Sousa, *A militarização da infância: expressões do nacionalismo na cultura brasileira*, «Cadernos Cedes», n. 52, 2000, pp. 104-121, in partic. p. 108.

<sup>24</sup> *O Batalhão Escolar do Município Lisbonense*, cit.

<sup>25</sup> Brouzac, *Les bataillons scolaires 1880-1891*, cit.

<sup>26</sup> In France, school battalions were under the tutelage of three ministries. See Brouzac, *Les bataillons scolaires 1880-1891*, cit.

the educational councilman<sup>27</sup>. The regulatory vagueness does not prevent, until 1886 (moment where the decline of school battalions becomes evident), the implementation of military instruction by the municipality in the 16 central or graded male schools, and in some unitary schools<sup>28</sup>.

But, rather than focusing on school battalions, our research agenda will pay particular attention to the following: i) the ideal of civic celebration associated with the great events of the nation's history; ii) the way military practices penetrate in daily school life.

First, let us see what was the shape assumed by public ceremonial reverence devoted to the nation's deeds/heroes; if you prefer, how the nationalistic imaginary dealt with these themes (eminently civic), in order to provide the nation with a history. It is clear, however, that the idea of training «good patriots» was not reduced to youth militarization. Indeed, as argued by Pierre Arnaud, «the ideology of education will be permeated with a key idea: the duty to the Homeland»<sup>29</sup>. Regarding teaching development, this means that subjects, such as history, geography, and civic education, would be *instrumentalised* within that scope.

Among the various celebrations where the battalions of the Lisbon's municipality were present, we emphasise the one that took place in 16<sup>th</sup> September 1885, particularly due to the duration of the festivities (which have lasted a week) and their laudatory tone. It was the official acknowledgment of Hermenegildo Capelo and Roberto Ivens, who were raised to the status of national heroes after another exploration voyage to the lands of Africa. To contextualize, this expedition had a particular importance to Portugal's affirmation in Central Africa at a time when its hegemony in that part of the globe was seriously threatened. Hence, the Lisbon's City Hall played an important role in the aforementioned celebrations (organized by the Lisbon's Geography Society), associating school battalions to it:

A City Hall's committee will await the distinguished explorers upon arrival. Following the landing of the Navy's Arsenal, the City Hall will receive the distinguished explorers in the

<sup>27</sup> It is important to say that in 1882 the intention was the creation of a school battalion with students from the six male central schools existent to date. The evolution was the following: in 1886, the 1<sup>st</sup> school battalion was formed by Central School's platoons 2, 6, 11, 13 and 17; on that same year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> school battalion was composed by Central School's platoons 1, 4, 8 and 15. *O Batalhão Escolar do Município Lisbonense*, cit., «Boletim do Serviço Geral de Instrução Pública da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa», n. 1, 1887 and Arquivo Histórico da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (AHCML), *Comunicações da Direção-Geral de Instrução Municipal*, Official note nr. 80, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1886.

<sup>28</sup> «Boletim do Serviço Geral de Instrução Pública da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa», n. 1, 1887.

<sup>29</sup> P. Arnaud (ed.), *Les athlètes de la République. Gymnastique, sport et idéologie républicaine. 1870/1914*, Paris, Montréal, L'Harmattan, 1997, pp. 43-44.

great room of its palace, and the president will read a short speech congratulating them on behalf of the city for their return and services [...]. On an opportunely designated day the distinguished explorers will be invited to review the school battalion and receive their salute<sup>30</sup>.

It should be noted that what is at stake here is the establishment of symbolic elements, exulting and popularizing the nation's great figures – the heroes' cult – to consolidate a cultural identity. Moreover, in the line of research of Anne-Marie Thiesse, a nation worthy of such name should present: «a history establishing continuity with great ancestors, a series of paragons heroes of national virtues, a language, cultural monuments [...]»<sup>31</sup>.

We can better understand the *effect* of the aforementioned celebration, if we keep in mind the investment it entailed and even the changes that it provoked in the schools' daily life. Indeed, the presence of the battalions was arranged with about fifteen days in advance, being determined that, for tests, the Central School Nr. 8 would receive platoons from several schools<sup>32</sup>. On the other hand, by the educational councilman command, and in order to meet the necessary preparation for the event, choral singing and drawing lessons were suspended at the aforementioned school<sup>33</sup>.

Another commemorative festivity associated with the nation's journey where school battalions had an important participation was the 1<sup>st</sup> December; this date destined to annually celebrate the Restauration of Independence in Portugal. In 1886, for example, it was the very own «1<sup>st</sup> December Committee» to request to Lisbon's City Hall the presence of the battalions<sup>34</sup>. What one finds, however, is that from that year on – which corresponds to the apogee of the decentralizing municipality's educational policy<sup>35</sup> – uneasiness towards the public displays of «soldier-students» starts to arise. In this regard, an episode which occurred in the context of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1886 celebration is elucidating. Indeed, the situation stems from the fact that the executive committee of the Lisbon's City Hall had determined, at a previous time, «not to allow school battalions to take part in acts that are not purely educational»<sup>36</sup>. But this issue is debated at a City Hall's meeting, and the councilmen, despite expressing arguments in favour and against the decision of the executive committee, end up approving (unanimously) the participation of the school battalions on the 1<sup>st</sup> December

<sup>30</sup> *Arquivo Municipal*, session of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1885, p. 390.

<sup>31</sup> Cited by A. Fontaine, *Alexandre Daguett (1816-1894): une histoire pour les Fribourgeois. La fabrication d'un Roman Cantonal*, «Annales Fribourgeoises», n. 76, 2014, pp. 47-56, in particular p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> AHCML, *Gestão administrativa escolar, série memorandos*, Oficial note of 5<sup>th</sup> September 1885.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Arquivo Municipal*, session of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1886.

<sup>35</sup> See Manique da Silva, *Do modo de aprender e de ensinar. Renovação pedagógica e cenários de experimentação da escola graduada (1834-1892)*, cit.

<sup>36</sup> *Arquivo Municipal*, session of 27<sup>th</sup> November 1886, p. 381.



celebrations. However, there are indications that something is changing. For example, councilman Matoso Santos recalled that «it was not convenient that the appearance of the school battalion in the ceremony was very long»<sup>37</sup>; Elias Garcia felt that the intent of the «1<sup>st</sup> December Committee» should be accepted, «but without forcing anyone into it, that is, students whose parents do not want them to go should not be obliged»<sup>38</sup>. It is mostly via body centrality and physical education within the scope of educational discourses produced from the late nineteenth century on that there will be a shift in the way of envisioning school battalions. We shall return to this subject.

However, it would be reducing to think that the public display of battalions was limited to civic celebrations of this kind of nature (greatly associated to the promotion of patriotism). There is, indeed, another kind of public displays where what is at stake is not exactly «national imagination». We refer in particular to the idea of moral character formation. Examples are the presence of battalions: i) at funerals of municipal schools' students; ii) policing public spaces; iii) in communion sessions of welfare institutions' students.

But it is clear that military instruction *per se* presupposes the internalization of discipline, order and respect. It is in this sense, and not so much in the possibility of the youth knowing how to handle weapons, that a prestigious officer sublimates the value of military instruction referring also to obedience, which in his perspective should «arise from the sense of duty and not from the fear of punishment»<sup>39</sup>.

Let us now look at the way military practices penetrated the daily school life. The example of Central School Nr. 6, where the 1<sup>st</sup> school battalion was based, constitutes a good starting point. And if it is true, as we have said, that municipal protection overlaps military authority, no less true will be to mark the autonomy enjoyed by the officers in the organization of military instruction – the reference, in fact, is the Army school<sup>40</sup>. This idea, among others, emerges in the following excerpt signed by Joaquim Emídio Xavier Machado, at the time he becomes responsible for military instruction and teaching gymnastics at Central Schools Nr. 6 and Nr. 11:

The war material, uniforms, equipment, and other military items find themselves at the best conservation status [...]. The way I found assembled bookkeeping and other service provisions was also a satisfaction for me [...]. On the military issue itself, everything seems to be in accordance with the general laws of the Army, and because the practices followed

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>39</sup> J.E. Morais Sarmento, *A instrução militar na escola primaria e no lyceu*, «Diário de Notícias», 27<sup>th</sup> August 1882, [p. 1].

<sup>40</sup> Possibly this fact might have prevented that, at the municipal sphere, a proper regulation has been produced.

in these schools revealed righteousness and progress, I have no doubt in using them, certain that I am seeking the usefulness of education<sup>41</sup>.

However, he is very critical of the organization of gymnastics which, he argues, is «the indispensable preliminary of military instruction»<sup>42</sup>. At this historical stage there is an idea that begins to take shape: gymnastics and military exercises should become autonomous. Alfredo Dias, teacher of gymnastics at Lisbon's municipal schools, approaches this issue proposing a gymnastics teachers training course<sup>43</sup>. From his point of view, the City Hall «parodied» the teaching of the aforementioned subject, also adding that in Lisbon the only organized gymnasium was the one of Central School Nr. 1<sup>44</sup>; however, it functioned «more for military exercises than for gymnastics itself due to the way things are organized»<sup>45</sup>.

The image that best reflects what Alfredo Dias intended to emphasize – the military orientation of school gymnastics and, in a way, the nonsense of a military instruction as an end in itself – is given by Adolfo Coelho. At the same time, it is an impressive portrait about the way military instruction configured the daily school life; the criticism of Adolfo Coelho results from the knowledge he has from the guidance given to physical education at several European countries, particularly Germany.

I had recognized that those exercises made the boys look stupid. I observed military instruction in those schools and I visited in 1883 [...] the classes of all the centrals then created in Lisbon, and I watched many stiff, sad, mechanized students due to the effect of that instruction, and when talking with some of them I have collected enough clear confessions that the instructors inspired fear of punishment without making them take the exercises seriously, and respect who instructed them<sup>46</sup>.

On the other hand, sources give the idea that the integration of gymnastics and military exercises in the curriculum brought difficulties with it because it did not adjust to school life. It is noteworthy, for example, the inexistence of articulation between the schedule of a certain curriculum matrix (reading, arithmetic, calligraphy...) and the schedule of gymnastics and military exercises. The transcript that follows elucidates this division well:

<sup>41</sup> AHCML, *Correspondência recebida/Pelouro da instrução*, Official note nr. 1, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1886.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Official note nr. 2, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1886.

<sup>43</sup> A. Dias, *Apontamentos para a Reforma e Historia da Educação Physica em Portugal*, Lisboa, Typographia Lisbonense, 1887.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> F.A. Coelho, *Questões Pedagógicas. Os exercícios militares na escola*, «O Instituto», n. 58, 1911, pp. 23-36, in particular p. 29.

[Military] exercises, which last for an hour, end at 5 p.m.; an inconvenient time in the current station for the withdrawing of many students [...]. The lessons in this school end at 2 p.m., hence, and with good results, military exercises could begin a quarter of an hour after the end of those lessons; and thus the aforementioned students would arrive at their homes yet in daylight<sup>47</sup>.

From 1886 the decline of military instruction in schools is clear. Among other factors, some of them already stated, the disturbance caused in the life of the students (and families) would compete for this state of affairs, despite the efforts of the central schools' principals and teachers of military instruction. Attention should be paid to the following report:

The principal said that, due to the scarce attendance of students, some of which always presented an excuse and even skipped school in the days of the drills, in accordance with the teacher, the problem of military exercises would be prevented. Therefore, he had read a letter from his Excellency Mr. João de Melo Pereira de Vasconcelos, where the latter pronounced himself in order to create a lesson on Thursdays [school holiday] and another on a school day, not pre-set on the schedule but arranged with the principal, always preventing in advance the respective military inspector<sup>48</sup>.

But, as stated, it is mainly via the centrality of the body and physical education within the scope of educational discourses produced from the late nineteenth century on that a shift in the way of seeing military instruction is registered. In fact, in 1886, the strength of the hygienist argument is found within the discussion framework of central and unitary schools of the Lisbon's municipality. The positions are fracturing within the republican council. Indeed, Teófilo Braga, admitting not wanting to «offend» his colleague Elias Garcia, states that «no gymnastic should be taught [...] when it is not subordinated to a physiological programme»<sup>49</sup>. In another perspective he argues that «to subordinate the gymnastic movements to the rifle, and the platoon [...] meant the creation of a subservience principle rather than an obedience principle!»<sup>50</sup>.

In May of 1891, relying on the concern about the students' health, the Administrative Committee would not have any doubts to negatively respond to the request of the Portuguese Club Royal Gymnasium regarding the participation of school battalions and its respective bands in a military celebration; nevertheless, the board of the Royal Gymnasium assured the students would not suffer «from fatigue [...] or insolation»<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> AHCML, *Correspondência recebida/Pelouro da instrução*, Official note of 31<sup>st</sup> October 1886.

<sup>48</sup> AHCML, *Actas escolares/Conferências pedagógicas*, School Assembly session, 7<sup>th</sup> November 1887.

<sup>49</sup> *Actas das Sessões da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa*, session of 6<sup>th</sup> March 1886, p. 115.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>51</sup> *Actas das Sessões da Comissão Administrativa do Município de Lisboa*, session of 13<sup>th</sup> May 1891, p. 201.



Pic. 1. Lisbon's municipality school battalion group. Officers, sergeants, standard-bearer and bugler of Central School Nr. 6. (Source: «Froebel», 12, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1883).

### *Republic, Homeland worship and school youth's militarization*

Continuously defended by republicanism and freemasonry sectors, the so-called Preparatory Military Instruction proved to be one of the most emblematic expressions among civic manifestations promoted in the period following the establishment of the Republic in 5<sup>th</sup> October 1910<sup>52</sup>. The previous experience of school youth's militarization was then resumed and deepened in articulation with a broad set of practices which had patriotism as its great symbolic reference, being directly present in the flag and hymn cults, and in commemorative festivities of moments associated with the nation's journey or in exemplary figures that represented it.

<sup>52</sup> In this framework we resume and deepen the ideas presented in the following texts: J. Pintassilgo, *República e Formação de Cidadãos: a Educação Cívica nas Escolas Primárias da 1ª República Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Edições Colibri, 1998; J. Pintassilgo, *A Revista de Educação Geral e Técnica no contexto do Portugal republicano. O debate sobre a educação moral e cívica*, in A.R. Schelbauer, J.C.S. Araújo (edd.), *História da Educação pela imprensa*, Campinas, Alínea Editora, 2007, pp. 129-154. About the Preparatory Military Instruction see also the following article: J. Brás, M.N. Gonçalves, *A Instrução Militar Preparatória na I República: A Ginástica da Educação Cívica, a Educação Cívica da Ginástica*, «Vértice», n. 44, February 2009, pp. 49-66.

The first step, taken shortly after the revolution, was the appointment of a committee to prepare a draft regulation. The committee was able to successfully complete their work. The Decree of 26<sup>th</sup> May 1911 published the regulation and programme of Preparatory Military Instruction. Afterwards, textbooks to support that programme were published<sup>53</sup>. The respective education was divided in two grades. The 1<sup>st</sup> grade included young people between 7 and 16 years old. The 1<sup>st</sup> grade study plan, which comprised primary school, included, in addition to the actual military preparation, civic education, and significant gymnastics and choral singing. Teaching should be implemented in all municipalities and parishes of the country, between the months of October and July, according to the school year, twice a week, at schools, barracks or military instruction camps, and it would be taught by teachers with the help of military instructors. Even summer courses were organized to train primary teachers in this area. Nevertheless, the resistances to such initiative, as well as the scarce number of qualified teachers, made the direct participation of military instructors necessary. These instructors assumed themselves as teachers of Preparatory Military Instruction at several schools. As in France, the military instruction of the primary schools' young students intended at first, in practical terms, their participation in civic events promoted by republicanism. The regulation itself previses:

Teachers and instructors, with the assistance of administrative bodies, companies and other people, should annually organize patriotic and civic events with gymnastic exercises, sports, choir singing, in which students of preparatory military instruction courses will take part, and to whom prizes should be conferred<sup>54</sup>.

With the intent to mobilize the civil society to this initiative the so-called Preparatory Military Instruction's Societies were created through an ordinance of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1912, which published the respective regulation. They were assigned the purpose of citizens' military training. The idea was to have permanently prepared citizens to defend the homeland in case of danger<sup>55</sup>. According to one of the project's disseminators, José Eduardo Moreira Sales:

They [Societies] are the beautiful educational centres where the young will learn to develop the body through gymnastics and outdoor games. Therein several civic principles are taught

<sup>53</sup> The following are an example: M.F. Almeida, *Instrução Militar Preparatória, 1º Grau: Educação Cívica, Ginástica, Higiene, Em harmonia com o Decreto de 26 de maio de 1911*, Porto, Livraria Académica Editora de J. Guedes da Silva, 1913; B.V. Fernandes, *Manual Elementar de Ginástica: Instrução Militar Preparatória, 1º Grau, Em harmonia com o Decreto Regulamentar de 26 de maio de 1911*, 2ª Edição, Barcelos, Edição do «Centro de Novidades», 1914.

<sup>54</sup> *Diário do Governo*, nr. 123 of 27<sup>th</sup> May 1911.

<sup>55</sup> In the Portuguese National Library the statutes of two of those Societies may be consulted, the Nr. 1, with headquarters in Lisbon, and the Nr. 18 with headquarters in Coruche: *Estatutos da Sociedade de Instrução Militar Preparatória N° 1, Lisboa*, Imprensa Nacional, 1912; *Estatutos da Sociedade de Instrução Militar Preparatória, N° 18, Lisboa*, Imprensa Nacional, 1913.

in order to provide each individual with the consciousness of its duties and its rights. And since the goal is to prepare good citizens, fit to defend their Homeland, shooting instruction has a major importance in those societies<sup>56</sup>.

Accordingly, the Preparatory Military Instruction's Societies have been committed with the organization of activities, such as courses, lectures, conferences, visits and tours. The *Preparatory Military Instruction's Bulletin*, published by Societies Nr. 2 and Nr. 5, and directed by the physician Morais Manchego, gives an account, in its Nr. 2 of June 1913, on the societies' participation in the City Festivities to be held during that month describing the ritual in some detail:

The presentation of Preparatory Military Instruction's Societies, in the hippodrome of Belém, which constitutes, as it is known, one of the festivities' events with which Lisbon will grace its visitors next week, should be enveloped with the greatest brilliancy. All societies have been training intensively, so it is expected that despite its reduced time of instruction this parade will show the advantage of such institutions, proving once more the value of particular initiative when it is imbued with homeland love and affection for the republican institutions. Lisbon's societies will parade the maximum of its effectives and it is expected that the provinces will also be largely represented. It is desirable that everyone would present themselves properly uniformed according to the official regulation in order to achieve harmony<sup>57</sup>.

The programme involves the following steps: societies' «concentration» and respective «formation», delivery of «honour badges» to the societies by the President of the Republic, «Scouting» and «Red Cross» demonstrations, «gymnastic exercises», and finally «march in salute». In the article «details» the Lieutenant Virgílio Dasmasceno Simões presents in greater detail the several steps of the programme. The presence of bands is noteworthy, being the national anthem played in more than one occasion. The ritualism of the moment is well expressed by the description of its final steps: «Upon exercise completion the entire line turns right and parades to the sound of a nuptial march performed by the bands passing in front of the tribune; the standard-bearers will incorporate themselves into their societies as they pass in front of them»<sup>58</sup>. Military exercises actually emerge as functional regarding the acquisition of appropriate body postures to the figure of the «citizen-soldier», and the internalization of republican principles. The used uniforms and designed choreographies assumed the public display of a certain citizen profile, and the sharing of citizenship

<sup>56</sup> J.E.M. Sales, *O livro do cidadão-soldado*, Lisboa, Papelaria Fernandes, 1912, pp. 104-105.

<sup>57</sup> *As Festas da Cidade*, «Boletim da Instrução Militar Preparatória», n. 2, June 1913, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> V.D. Simões, *Detalhes*, «Boletim da Instrução Militar Preparatória», n. 2, June 1913, p. 13.

Such public demonstration occurred in 8<sup>th</sup> January 1913, in the Hippodrome of Belém, as part of the City Festivities, and we can find a detailed description on the daily newspapers of the time, namely in «O Século», which includes abundant news about the event among the days 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 1913.

values dear to republicanism<sup>59</sup>. It is clearly in the study of this kind of ritual manifestations that concepts like «invention of tradition» (Eric Hobsbawm) or «imagined community» (Benedict Anderson) become functional<sup>60</sup>.

In addition to the public display of the so-called school battalions, military educational practices in liaison with physical education penetrated the daily school life as well. Vidal Oudinot in his *Notas dum Inspetor Escolar* testifies to the presence of that military ritualism inside the school itself from the example of one of the schools of Tomar:

In the following day, at regulatory hour, 12 o'clock, the exercises begun and precisely at the appointed time the aforementioned coronel [Celestino] entered the recreation premises accompanied by other officers [...]. At the voice of command children aligned with a certain élan – and during a quarter of an hour elegantly executed some military exercises. In the eyes of the officers there was a certain astonishment that I carefully and anxiously examined when the evolutions of two, four, and six formed without hesitation or embarrassment. These were followed by the modified Ling gymnastics' exercises. So, the boys were lovely due to their speed and vivacity of movements, and by the gracefulness of their positions<sup>61</sup>.

Just as it is defined in the legal diplomas and propaganda texts, Preparatory Military Instruction emerged inextricably linked to civic education. In fact, an important part of the curriculum was dedicated to this subject matter. Henrique Pires Monteiro clearly reiterates that perspective: «By educating the child and the adolescent, Preparatory Military Instruction mainly instils civic virtues; essentially it forms citizens before instructing soldiers»<sup>62</sup>. The desideratum to attain was the «armed nation», as it is referred several times. The ideologists of this initiative keep drawing attention to the need not to confuse the actual military instruction held in barracks with the pre-military preparation thereby included in the school curriculum. Desidério Beça, the most prolific of the Preparatory Military Instruction's propagandists notes exactly that: «It is time for everyone to understand that the intention is not to give the young man a warrior education, nor to create soldiers before time»<sup>63</sup>. In addition to being directed towards civic education, Preparatory Military Instruction also aspires to train the moral character; at that level it is fundamentally intended to lead the

<sup>59</sup> In this context, about the articulation between uniforms and choreography see, for example, the following book: J. Nathan, *Uniforms and non-uniforms: Communication through clothing*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1986.

<sup>60</sup> See E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (edd.), *The invention of tradition*, repr., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985; See Anderson, *Imagined communities*, cit.

<sup>61</sup> V. Oudinot, *Notas dum inspetor escolar. Acção (intra e extra-escolar)*, Porto, Livraria Chardron de Léo & Irmão, Editores, 1915, p. 37.

<sup>62</sup> H.P. Monteiro, *A escola primária e o futuro cidadão*, in *Liga Nacional de Instrução: Quarto Congresso Pedagógico (Abril de 1914)*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1916, p. 323.

<sup>63</sup> D. Beça, *Instrução Militar preparatória*, Lisboa, Papelaria e Tipografia Fernandes & C.<sup>a</sup>, [s.d.], p. L.

schoolchildren to internalize the typical discipline of «military spirit»<sup>64</sup>. Despite its revolutionary character, the young Republic thus seeks to assume itself as inherently orderly and disciplined, well aligned with the positivist tradition and the nineteenth-century liberalism.

Another aspect permanently stressed by publicists is the one regarding the primacy of physical education within Preparatory Military Instruction. According to the aforementioned Desidério Beça, the regulation of 26<sup>th</sup> May 1911 «judiciously based military preparation in physical education»<sup>65</sup>, both tending to the integral formation of man and citizen. The insistency on the importance of physical education is related with the ideological context of the time with emphasis on the following factors: the influence of the positivist organicism, the development of an anthropology well marked by ethnical prejudice, and the advancement of hygienist tendencies in articulation with the new pedagogies. The decay that was admitted to be reaching the Portuguese society was largely explained by the physical degeneration that, according to what was believed at the time, would be penetrating that same society, a situation that was aggravated by the usual absence of physical education on school practices. The affirmation of the imperious need to proceed with the «improvement» and «rejuvenation», «reinforcement» or «physical elevation of the Portuguese race»<sup>66</sup> has become, due to its repetition, a commonplace of the time's thought as an expression of its regenerating will. The youth's military preparedness, which had the goal of «regenerating the homeland»<sup>67</sup>, was therefore a bold step towards the 'Portuguese renaissance'<sup>68</sup>.

Preparatory Military Instruction had also the explicit purpose of promoting patriotism, central cult of the republican civic religiousness. This fact is clearly present in the content of the programme attached to the aforementioned regulation and in the textbooks published for that purpose, as well as in the remaining legislative or propagandist production. According to the decree-law of 26<sup>th</sup> May 1911, the aim is to develop in students «the patriotic devotion», «the sense of duty and homeland love»<sup>69</sup>. Therefore, the implementation of military preparedness within school youth emerges as an important dimension of the republican project of citizens' political socialization.

However, this was not a peaceful issue within the pedagogical field. Among the educator of the time, there were several critical voices of the project, and some public controversies actually took place. Tendentiously, Preparatory Military Instruction was defended by politicians and military devoted to the official republicanism with presence in the pedagogical field; in turn, the

<sup>64</sup> Beça, *Instrução Militar preparatória*, cit., pp. XLIII and 38.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XXXIV.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. XXX, XXXIV, L and 99-100.

<sup>67</sup> Sales, *O livro do cidadão-soldado*, cit., pp. 104-105.

<sup>68</sup> Beça, *Instrução Militar preparatória*, cit., p. XXI.

<sup>69</sup> *Diário do Governo*, nr. 123, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1911.



educators close to the pedagogical perspectives of the so-called New School were usually very critical of the experience. Here we will analyse two examples of relatively circumscribed debates. One of them found expression on the pages of the «Revista de Educação: Geral e Técnica», organ of the Pedagogical Studies' Society, one of the most important periodicals devoted to education during the republican period. The contributions here convened are situated between the years of 1911 and 1916. Some of the texts are the result of discussions that took place at the Society's meetings and were reported in its minutes. The other debate involved two teachers, Viriato de Almeida and Augusto de Vasconcelos, and was conducted between December of 1912 and March of 1913, throughout several numbers of one of the most emblematic professional publications of the time, «A Federação Escolar».

In the case of the «Revista de Educação», the majority of opinions therein expressed was contrary to the school military preparation's experience. The used arguments combined anti-chauvinism, anti-militarism, pacifism, and specific pedagogical reasons, such as the critique of an imposed subject or the defence of the child's respect. This was the case of Tolentino de Sousa Ganhó, a physical education teacher that by criticizing the perverse association of his subject to military preparation considered the latter only required «an all external discipline», which would not be consistent with the idea that the child is «a delicate organism» and not «a miniature man»<sup>70</sup>. All the necessary competencies of the modern democracies' citizen-soldier – stamina, initiative, coolness – would be provided, in this author's opinion, by physical education, which addressed «the soul through the body», and not by Preparatory Military Instruction, which «may act upon the body, but paralyses the brain»<sup>71</sup>. In the same sense, F. Pinto de Miranda pronounced himself in an article devoted to physical education in primary school; one of the main conclusions was as follows: «School battalions, teaching of company or regiment's abstract tactic, short range shot, are inappropriate things in school, which are opposed to its neutral spirit»<sup>72</sup>.

One of the central pieces of this debate was Adolfo Lima, one of the chief Portuguese references of the renewing pedagogical movement, libertarian intellectual, inspirer of the paradigmatic experience of the School-Workshop Nr. 1, director of the renewed Primary Normal School of Lisbon, and author of major works, such as *Pedagogia Sociológica* and *Metodologia*. It was the thesis of the school's political and religious neutrality that was a starting point, during the World War, for Adolfo Lima to reflect upon the mission of the school – «create individualities» – and its relation with war, in an article

<sup>70</sup> T.S. Ganhó, *A Instrução Militar Preparatória*, «Revista de Educação: Geral e Técnica», vol. 1, n. 1, January 1911, p. 27.

<sup>71</sup> Ganhó, *A Instrução Militar Preparatória*, cit., p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> F.P. Miranda, *A educação física na escola primária*, «Revista de Educação: Geral e Técnica», vol. 1, n. 3, April 1912, p. 221.

significantly entitled *The school and the war*. According to the author, the child should be educated to «love peace» and «hate war», which did not question the acquisition of the necessary physical and moral strength that would allow the child to fight for an «ideal», reaching the «paradox of fighting in order to gain peace». These goals could only be achieved if the school would be «exclusively handed over to pedagogues», not allowing in, «not even as a simple gymnastic teacher, the military»<sup>73</sup>.

In one of the society's meetings, Frederico Ferreira Simas, himself military, several times member of the society's board, and future director of the Institute of Odivelas during several decades, was the one that most explicitly manifested his agreement with the official stance by considering that «to train the citizen is to train the soldier», and that «military spirit is compatible with democracy», concluding with the idea that «patriotic feeling, habit of discipline and solidarity... should be created and developed at an early age»<sup>74</sup>.

One of the most interesting texts published in the pages of the «Revista de Educação», where the theme of military preparation is presented albeit indirectly, is signed by António Aurélio da Costa Ferreira, physician and educator, promoter of some of the most innovative pedagogical experiences of the time (namely regarding the education of the so-called «abnormal»), and at that time director of Casa Pia of Lisbon. The article is meaningfully entitled *Gymnastics – school of moral and civility*. To justify such articulation the author lists the set of «qualities» or «virtues» considered to be «fundamental», which could be acquired and developed through «command gymnastics' exercises»: «discipline, attention, will, method, order». Placing himself in a militant republican perspective, Costa Ferreira clearly emphasises the values associated with social order, discipline and obedience. «A society without order is not a society» he says. The contribution of gymnastics for the «overall discipline» and thereby for the development of «homeland sentiment», and the training of the «citizen-soldier» seemed decisive to him.

I firmly believe [...] that it is by cultivating the spirit of discipline [...], the instinct of obedience, the subordination of the individual to the whole, that we will prepare the good soldier, which once in row will obey with minimum effort as it is indispensable, and the good citizen, which once in society will naturally obey the laws as it is convenient<sup>75</sup>.

Costa Ferreira seeks to anticipate potential criticism from the pedagogical field articulating disciplinary practices he proposed with the more dear principles of the New School, with which he clearly relates.

<sup>73</sup> A. Lima, *A escola e a guerra*, «Revista de Educação: Geral e Técnica», vol. 3, n. 2, October 1914, pp. 170-172.

<sup>74</sup> F.F. Simas, *Atas das sessões. Sessão de 25 de Abril de 1911*, «Revista de Educação: Geral e Técnica», vol. 1, n. 4, July 1912, pp. 349-350.

<sup>75</sup> A.A.C. Ferreira, *Ginástica: Escola de moral e de civismo*, «Revista de Educação: Geral e Técnica», vol. 5, n. 1-2, October 1916, p. 89.

I know that there are often remarks about this disciplined education, this culture of obedience spirit may lead to the sacrifice of the student's personality, his individual initiative, and may result in his loss, turning him into a passive being, mechanized, automatic, that only knows how to obey [...]. It is side by side with command and obedience gymnastics that great importance is given to the culture of games [...], the culture of affectivity [...], and above all the most absolute respect for the student's initiative [...]. The teaching of gymnastics cannot and should not evade the fundamental law of modern pedagogy required to teach the child; first of all it needs to be interesting to the child, to be attractive, to be pleasant<sup>76</sup>.

The perceptions of Costa Ferreira anticipate with great clarity one of the great paradoxes of pedagogical modernity – the relation between freedom and discipline (or authority), or yet between autonomy and control. Far from seeing them as antagonistic terms, he seeks to articulate them in a coherent way as part of a wider project of citizen's integral formation. In addition to the political pragmatism – preservation and consolidation of the young and unstable Republic – we find in the author the belief that liberal society, with its cult of individuality and personality, cannot dispense order, discipline and obedience. Physical education – curricular space devoted to the freeing of the body, but also to the modelling of gestures and behaviours – arises here as a fundamental element in the context of an overall governance of individuals through the construction of their subjectivity. Disciplinary mechanisms assembled for such effect should act mainly through self-discipline, focusing both on body and soul.

Between December of 1912 and March of 1913, as previously mentioned, a heated controversy has been developed in the pages of «A Federação Escolar» between two primary school teachers, Viriato de Almeida and Augusto de Vasconcelos; this controversy was held between the numbers 42 to 56 of the newspaper, in a total of ten articles, five for each of the contestants. This was, regarding the public opinion, one of the climaxes on the debate about the subject of school youth's militarization. The synthesis of the arguments summoned throughout the articles' sequence allows us to conduct a systematization of the confronted positions, with the particularity of starring two Portuguese primary teachers. Let us start with Viriato de Almeida, author of the first article of the aforementioned series. In his opinion, the creation of school battalions undermines the primary school's mission, which should be «immensely pacifist»<sup>77</sup>. School should seek to inspire the child's feelings of peace and love, generous and altruistic ideas, teaching the child «to love his peers as a brother». The school would also have an obligation to teach the child to hate «the miserable spectacle» of war, where men were killing each other. Viriato de Almeida clearly highlights his pacifism when he appeals to the development

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>77</sup> V. Almeida, *Batalhões infantis*, «A Federação Escolar», 3<sup>a</sup> fase, 1 (42), 15<sup>th</sup> December 1912, pp. 1-2.

of «a holly crusade against war», despite admitting the possibility of a war to «defend a noble ideal»<sup>78</sup>. Naturally, within that point of view, the spread of the pacifist spirit and the schools' militarization would be absolutely antagonistic tendencies. The author also bases his position in a pedagogical perspective. According to the principles of modern pedagogy, child education would not be compatible with the «iron yoke of military discipline»<sup>79</sup>; furthermore, the child's age would not allow the comprehension of warrior ideas. «Strengthen the child both morally and physically – concludes Viriato de Almeida – and militarize the man»<sup>80</sup>.

The justification of Augusto Vasconcelos for what he calls, like his antagonist, «infant battalions» is centred in nationalistic arguments. The author even admits that the pacifist positions of Viriato de Almeida could eventually be configured as «a crime against the Homeland»<sup>81</sup>. In spite of proclaiming not wanting the war, Augusto de Vasconcelos considers that peace would be an utopia; therefore – and even setting aside an aggressive and warmongering policy on Portugal's end – remains, according to the author, the defence of what we have conquered, especially when taking into account the ambitions of the other major powers. Thus, it becomes necessary to attain an «armed nation», that is, «to make all capable citizens able to defend the Homeland»<sup>82</sup>. As a supreme ideal, this notion deserves, in his opinion, an absolute devotion. From that point of view, the usefulness of school battalions would be undeniable, not questioning the school's purpose, depending on the methodology used by teachers. And the author concludes with a solemn statement: «I love infant battalions, which tomorrow will defend our rights of independent nationality. And in this sublime feeling abounds almost the entire nation, only a handful of anarchists naiveties are the exception»<sup>83</sup>. This last reference is related to the fact that the Portuguese libertarians are the great defenders of the Universalist pacifism that Augusto de Vasconcelos imagines to be the foundation of his opponent's positions.

<sup>78</sup> V. Almeida, *Batalhões infantis*, «A Federação Escolar», 3ª fase, 1 (44), 29<sup>th</sup> December 1912, pp. 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>80</sup> V. Almeida, *Batalhões infantis*, «A Federação Escolar», 3ª fase, 1 (46), 12<sup>th</sup> January 1913, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> A. Vasconcelos, *Batalhões infantis*, «A Federação Escolar», 3ª fase, 1 (43), 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1912, p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> A. Vasconcelos, *Batalhões infantis*, «A Federação Escolar», 3ª fase, 1 (48), 26<sup>th</sup> January 1913, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

## *Conclusion*

The experience of school battalions during the 1880s clarifies to what extent the Lisbon's municipality was able to explore the autonomy margins aiming to devise a particular educational policy. On the other hand, what also seems to be very interesting is the fact that educational knowledge – as it is broadcasted and despite maintaining a certain degree of integrity – may acquire new labels depending on the contexts and actors; as we have seen, the international reference are the battalions of Paris. We have also noted that the issue of political certification is not completely sealed. To put it in another way, if the defence of the introduction of gymnastics and military exercises in school is mostly done by republican currents, the truth is that we also find monarchists striving for those same ideas. And it is not less important to emphasise that there is a turning in positions in a very short period of time. In fact, a personality like Teófilo Ferreira rightly points out the ephemerality of some pedagogical innovations. Nevertheless, the school battalions in the Lisbon's municipality will provide reference for future experiments – the historical role they played is mainly associated with the fostering idea of patriotism.

Continuing this initial experience, particularly in the first years of the Republic, the effort to disseminate military preparation in schools, create school battalions and Preparatory Military Instruction Societies, stimulate their participation in public events and promote the emergence of publications devoted to the subject was visible. Those efforts had a relative success. However, similarly to what has happened in other countries, the republican project to militarize young Portuguese did not have a real continuity. The warmongering context that then emerges, from 1916 on, associated to the Portuguese participation in the Great War, creates a favourable environment to the proliferation of discourses touting the educational potential of military preparation. Nevertheless, this context also contributes to inspire, in the pedagogical field, a set of discourses with the opposite meaning. The acclaimed virtues of the republican project of youth militarization are strongly questioned by those sectors that outline an alternative ideal of citizenship based on values as peace and solidarity. One must not forget, however, the positive contribution given by the initiative to the dissemination of physical education in schools, eventually freeing itself from military tutelage to which it had been connected at an early stage.

